

**REMARKS**

This responds to the Office Action mailed on December 3, 2004.

Claims 27, 31, and 32 are amended, no claims are canceled, and no claims are added; as a result, claims 13-18, and 26-47 are now pending in this application. The amendments to the claims are fully supported by the specification as originally filed. No new matter is introduced. The amendments are made to clarify the claims. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the amendments above and the remarks that follow.

**§103 Rejection of the Claims**

Claims 27-28 and 31-33 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al. (U.S. 6,144,224) in view of Chi (IEEE Transactions on Computers, Vol. 43, No. 5, May 1994)/ Chi (U.S. 5,387,885). Applicant traverses these rejections for at least the reasons made of record.

However, to expedite prosecution of the instant application claims 27, 31, and 32 are amended. Claim 27 is amended to depend on claim 13, and claims 31 and 32 are amended to follow the language of amended claim 27. Since claim 13 was allowed and claim 27 depends on claim 13, claim 27 is patentable over the cited art for at least the reasons that claim 13 is patentable over the cited art. Further, claims 28 and 31-33 depend on claim 27 and are patentable over the cited art for at least the reasons that claim 27 is patentable over the cited art.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these rejections of claims 27-28 and 31-33, and reconsideration and allowance of these claims.

**Allowable Subject Matter**

Claims 13-18, 26, 29, 30, and 34-47 were allowed.

Applicant acknowledges allowance of claims 13-18, 26, 29, 30, and 34-47.

Assertion of Pertinence

Applicant has not responded to the assertion of pertinence stated for the patents cited, but not relied upon, by the Office Action since these patents are not relied upon as part of the rejections in this Office Action. Applicant is expressly not conceding they have any pertinence and reserves the right to respond more fully should any of them form a part of some future rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (612) 371-2157 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

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By their Representatives,

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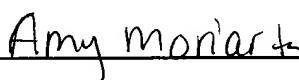
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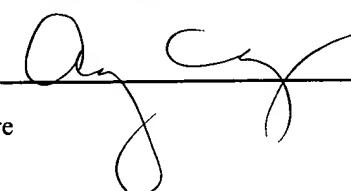
David R. Cochran  
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Name



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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 26th day of January, 2005.